CHARLTON COMICS GROUP

Charlton Classics

NO. 6 MAR
00288 81/CDC
50¢ UK 12P

CHARLTON PUBLICATION

Charlton Classics presents HERCULES

0 03
72246 00288
nomscans

HERCULES' CHOICE

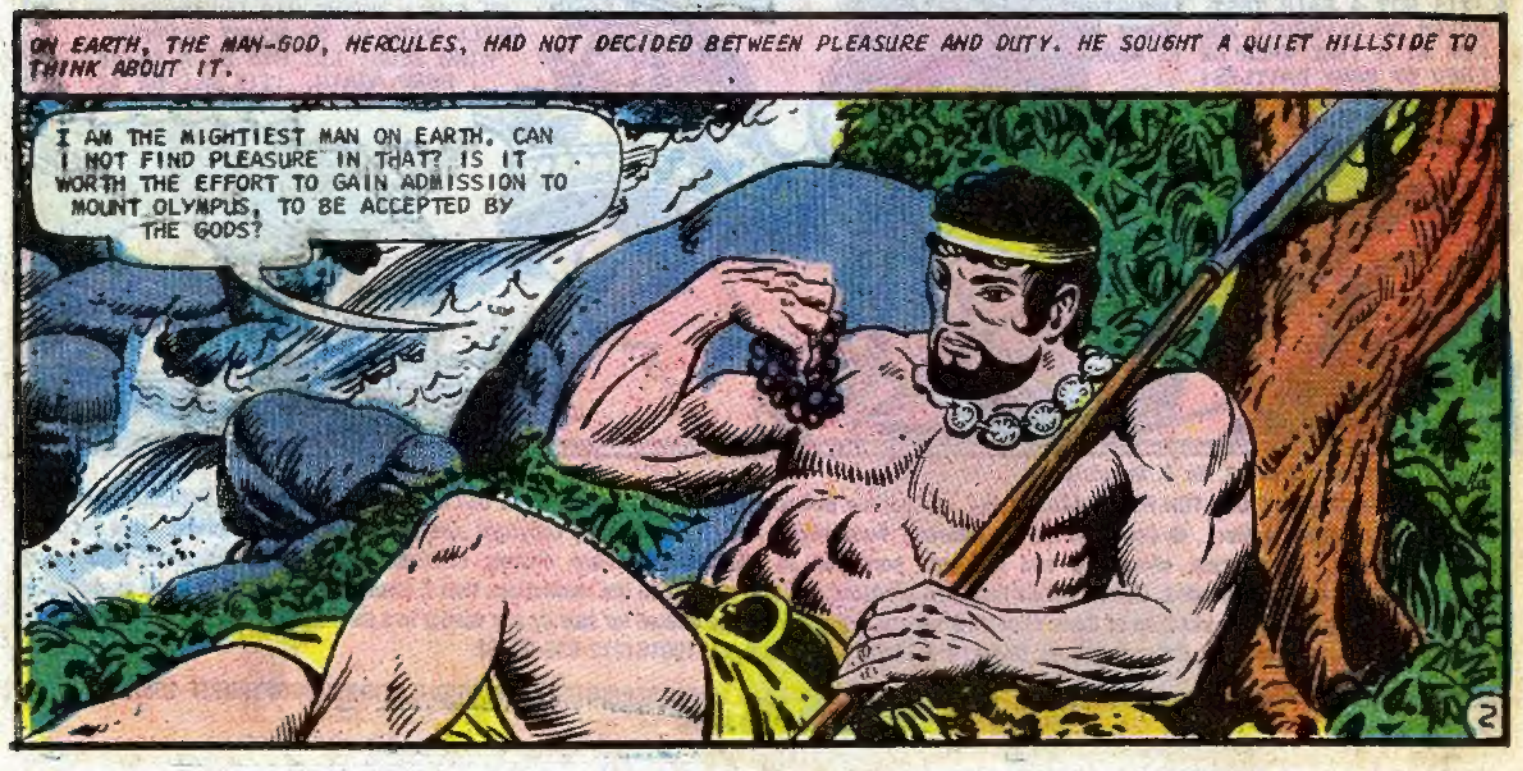
"I AM PLEASURE," QUOTH THE SMILING DAMSEL, "AND I HAVE MANY GIFTS FOR YOU." HERCULES LOOKED AT THIS TEMPTRESS AND HIS EYES WERE PLEASED IN WHAT THEY SAW. "I AM DUTY!" SPAKE HER UNSMILING SISTER. "CHOOSE ME AND YOU SHALL BE EVER ACQUAINTED WITH HARDSHIP AND PAIN."

HE PAUSED BUT A MOMENT... BUT DURING THIS MOMENT, ON MOUNT OLYMPUS, ZEUS AWAITED HIS ANSWER... AFRAID HIS HALF-MORTAL SON WOULD TAKE PLEASURE'S PATH! AND HERA, ZEUS' QUEEN ON OLYMPUS, GLOATED, SURE THE EARTH-BOUND GIANT WOULD AT LAST SHOW MORTAL WEAKNESS!

CHARLTON CLASSICS Vol. 2, No. 6, March, 1981.
Published bimonthly by CHARLTON PUBLICATIONS, INC. at Charlton Building, Division St., Derby, Conn. 06418. John Santangelo Jr., Publisher. George R. Wildman, Executive Editor. © Copyright 1980 Charlton Publications, Inc. International copyright secured. All rights reserved. 50¢ per copy. Printed in U.S.A. The stories, characters and incidents portrayed in this periodical are entirely fictitious, and no identification with actual persons, living or dead, is intended. This magazine has been produced and sold subject to the restrictions that it shall only be resold at retail as published and at full cover price. It is a violation of these stipulations for this magazine to be offered for sale by any vendor in a mutilated condition, or at less than full cover price. National Advertising Representatives: Dilo, 114 E. 32nd St., New York, N.Y. 10016 (212-686-9050).

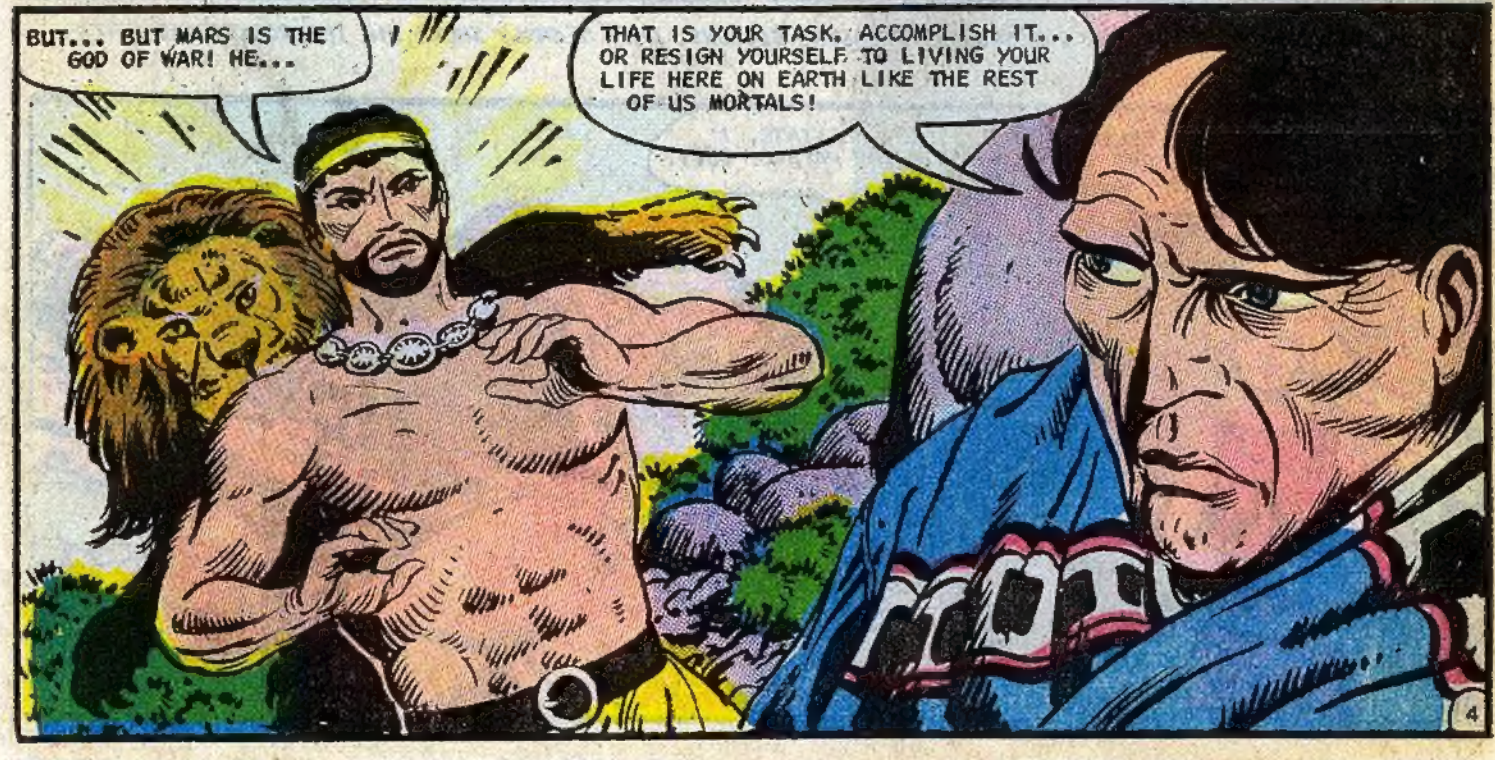
ALL EDITORIAL MATERIAL HEREIN CONTAINED WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN, AND IS REPRINTED FROM, PUBLICATIONS ©COPYRIGHT 1957, 1968 BY CHARLTON PUBLICATIONS, INC.

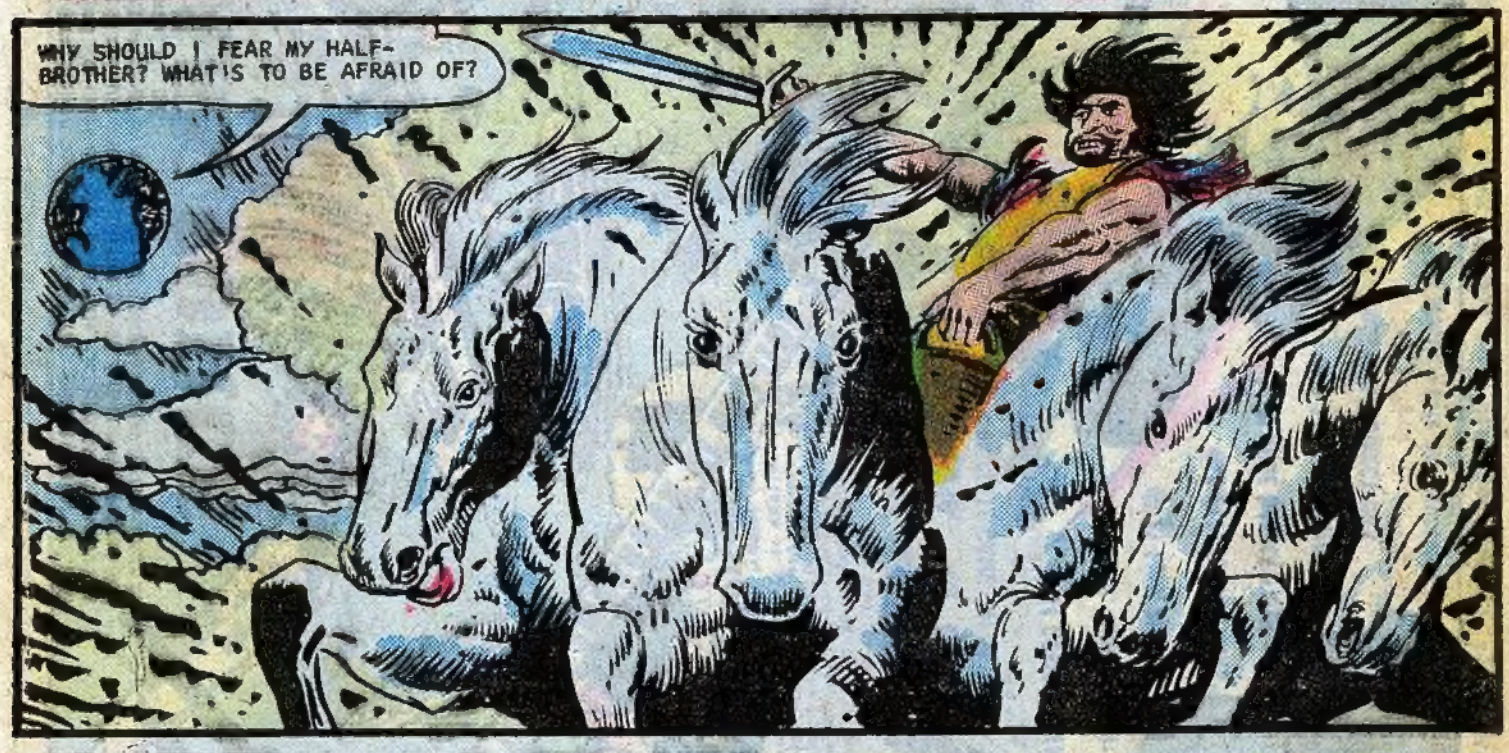
AFTER HERCULES TRIUMPHED IN THE LAND OF THE AMAZONS, ZEUS AND THE OTHER GODS AVOIDED HERA WHO WAS SO SORELY DISPLEASED BY THE MAN-GOD'S MIGHTY DEEDS. ONLY MARS WHO HAD BEEN AWAY TO WAR WAS UNAWARE OF HER BAD TEMPER. UNTIL...
NOT EVEN ZEUS CAN SHIELD HIM FROM MY WRATH MUCH LONGER!
YOU TOO ARE IN ILL HUMOR, O QUEEN HERA?
THERE WAS A MOST NOBLE WAR IN PROGRESS, CITIES WERE RAZED AND ARMIES WIPED OUT, IT WAS STIMULATING.
WHAT STOPPED THEM, MARS, GOD OF WAR?
THAT ACCURSED SON OF ZEUS, HERCULES! HE JOINED WITH ALEXANDER TO DEFEAT THE CORINTHIANS! THAT WAR COULD'VE DRAGGED ON FOR DECADES!
CURSE HIM, I SAY!
*SEE VOLUME #1 HERE


ON EARTH, THE MAN-GOD, HERCULES, HAD NOT DECIDED BETWEEN PLEASURE AND DUTY. HE SOUGHT A QUIET HILLSIDE TO THINK ABOUT IT.
I AM THE MIGHTIEST MAN ON EARTH. CAN I NOT FIND PLEASURE IN THAT? IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT TO GAIN ADMISSION TO MOUNT OLYMPUS, TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE GODS?
2

ONCE MORE, HERCULES IS AT THE CROSSROADS. PLEASURE BECKONS, DUTY STERNLY SHOWS HIM THE ROCKY ROAD WHICH HE MUST FOLLOW...

THE COUSIN ON HIS MOTHER'S SIDE OF HERCULES, KING EURYSTHEUS, SITS ALONG THIS ROCKY ROAD. HE HAS YET ANOTHER TASK FOR THE HALF MORTAL WHO YEARNS TO SIT WITH THE GODS ON MOUNT OLYMPUS.

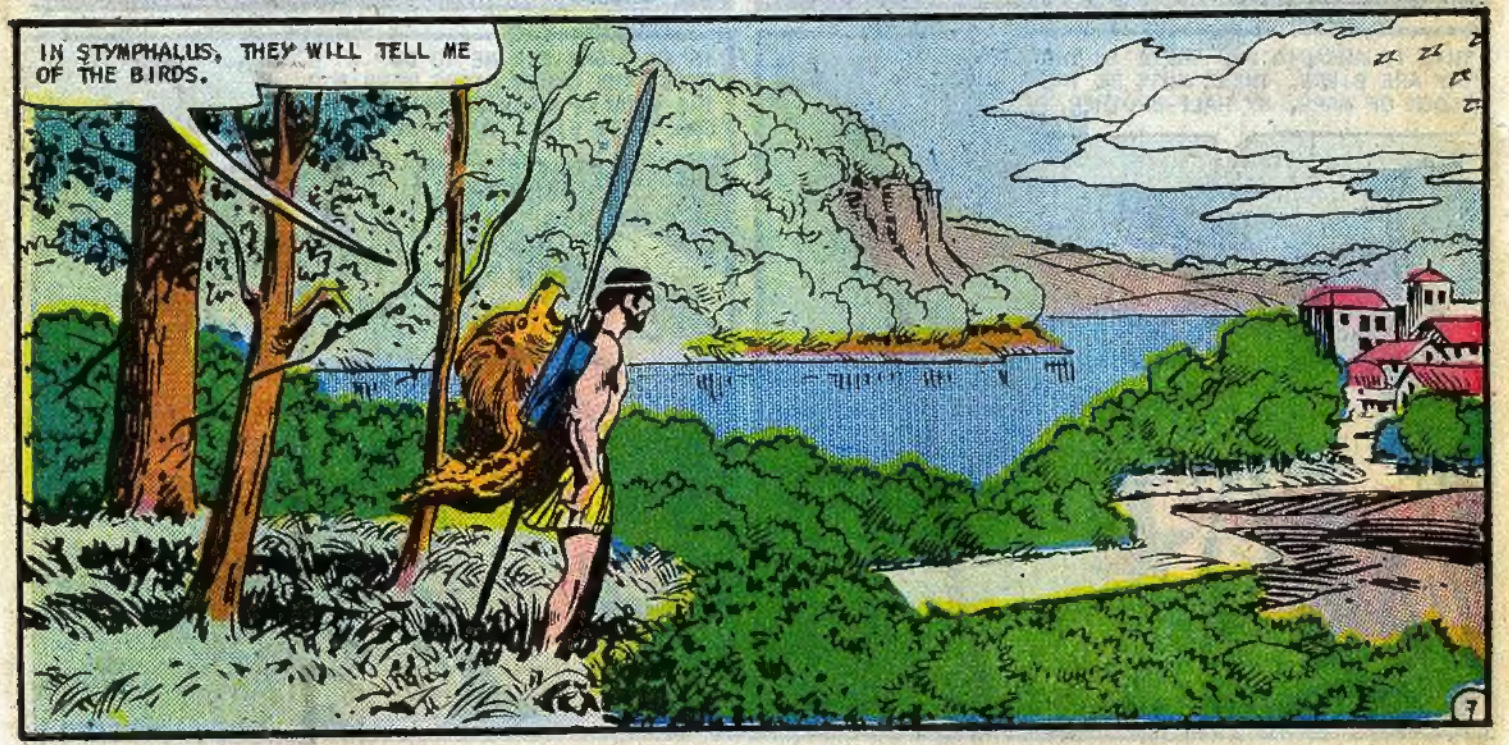




BUT AS HERCULES BRAVELY BEGINS HIS JOURNEY TO ARCADIA, ON MOUNT OLYMPUS MARS, THE GOD OF WAR, LAUGHS AT HIS TEMERITY.

POOR HERCULES! HERA, THE WIFE OF ZEUS IS HIS ENEMY AND NOW SHE HAS TURNED MARS AGAINST HIM TOO!
MINERVA THINKS KINDLY OF HERCULES. I WILL TELL HER OF THIS.
WHY DOES THE GODDESS OF LOVE SEEK THE GODDESS OF WISDOM, APHRODITE?
OH, MINERVA, HERCULES IS IN TROUBLE AGAIN!
AND WHILE APHRODITE TAKES COUNCIL WITH MINERVA, THE MIGHTY GOD OF WAR PREPARES TO END THIS QUEST OF HERCULES!
HE IS APPROACHING ARCADIA! HE DARES TO ATTACK THAT WHICH HE KNOWS IS MINE... I SHALL DESTROY HIM!
FOR DEFENDING MY STYMPHALIAN BIRDS, EVEN ZEUS CANNOT FAULT ME!
THIS IS ARCADIA AND THERE IN THE SKY ARE BIRDS. THESE MUST BE THE FLOCK OF MARS, MY HALF-BROTHER.
IS IT RIGHT FOR ME TO DO THIS? THE OTHER DEEDS WERE FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND. WHAT HARM CAN THESE BIRDS DO TO MEN?

JOURNEY'S END AT THE LAKE NEAR THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF STYMPHALUS. THE DANCING WATERS AND THE TRANQUIL CITY GLEAMING IN THE SUN WERE A DELIGHT TO THE EYE OF HERCULES...



BUT THERE IS NO ONE TO QUESTION. IT IS AN EMPTY CITY.
HALLOOO!!! COME OUT, COME OUT AND WELCOME A WEARY TRAVELER!
WHERE IS EVERYONE?
MY PETS NEED ME NOT! THEY WILL DEAL WITH HERCULES IN THEIR OWN SPECIAL WAY! THEIR OWN SPECIAL WAY. HAHAHAHAHA.
SOMEONE IS IN THERE! I HEARD VOICES!
WE MUST WARN HIM!!
THEY WILL GET HIM JUST AS THEY DID THE OTHERS! I MUST TELL HIM... EVEN IF I DIE FOR IT!
BEWARE, HERCULES! LOOK ABOVE YOU... THERE IS DEATH IN THE SKIES!
WHAT SAYEST THOU?
8

FIND SHELTER! IT WILL TEAR YOU TO PIECES AND DEVOUR YOU!
I HAVE FOUND THE STYMPHALIAN BIRDS!
IT CAN'T GET AT ME NOW, SHELTERED BY THESE STONE WALLS!
OVER HERE, HURRY!
STONE WALLS ARE NO PROTECTION AGAINST THIS HIDEOUS CREATURE!
WHO SPOKE? I CANNOT SEE.
QUICKLY BEFORE THOSE BRAZEN TALONS LOCK AROUND YOUR BODY!
9

A TRAP!!
WHO IS HE, DAUGHTER?
CRASH
THERE WASN'T TIME TO BRING YOU DOWN THE STEPS! ARE YOU INJURED MIGHTY STRANGER?
I AM HERCULES AND I DO NOT BRUISE EASILY. YOU SAVED MY LIFE, FAIR LADY.
WE HAVE FLED TO THE STORAGE CELLARS FOR ONLY HERE ARE WE SAFE FROM THE GREAT STYMPHALIAN BIRDS!
THEY LIVE ON THE FLESH OF MEN, O HERCULES.
NOW I KNOW THAT I MUST DRIVE THEM AWAY!

THE MIGHTY MAN-GOD TAKES HIS SPEAR AND RETURNS TO THE DAYLIGHT WORLD... DETERMINED NOW TO DESTROY THE VICIOUS BIRDS OF MARS, THE GOD OF WAR!

MY HALF-BROTHER CARES NOT FOR THE FATE OF MORTAL MEN! HE MUST LEARN TO KEEP HIS BLOOD-THIRSTY PETS IN A PLACE WHERE THEY WILL NOT PREY ON PEOPLE.

THEY'VE FLOWN AWAY!

I'LL HAVE TO SEEK THEM OUT!

NO HERCULES, YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO SEARCH FOR THE STYNOGAKUAN BIRDS. ONE IS CLOSE NOW. QUITE CLOSE.

BEWARE, HERCULES! LOOK ABOVE YOU!

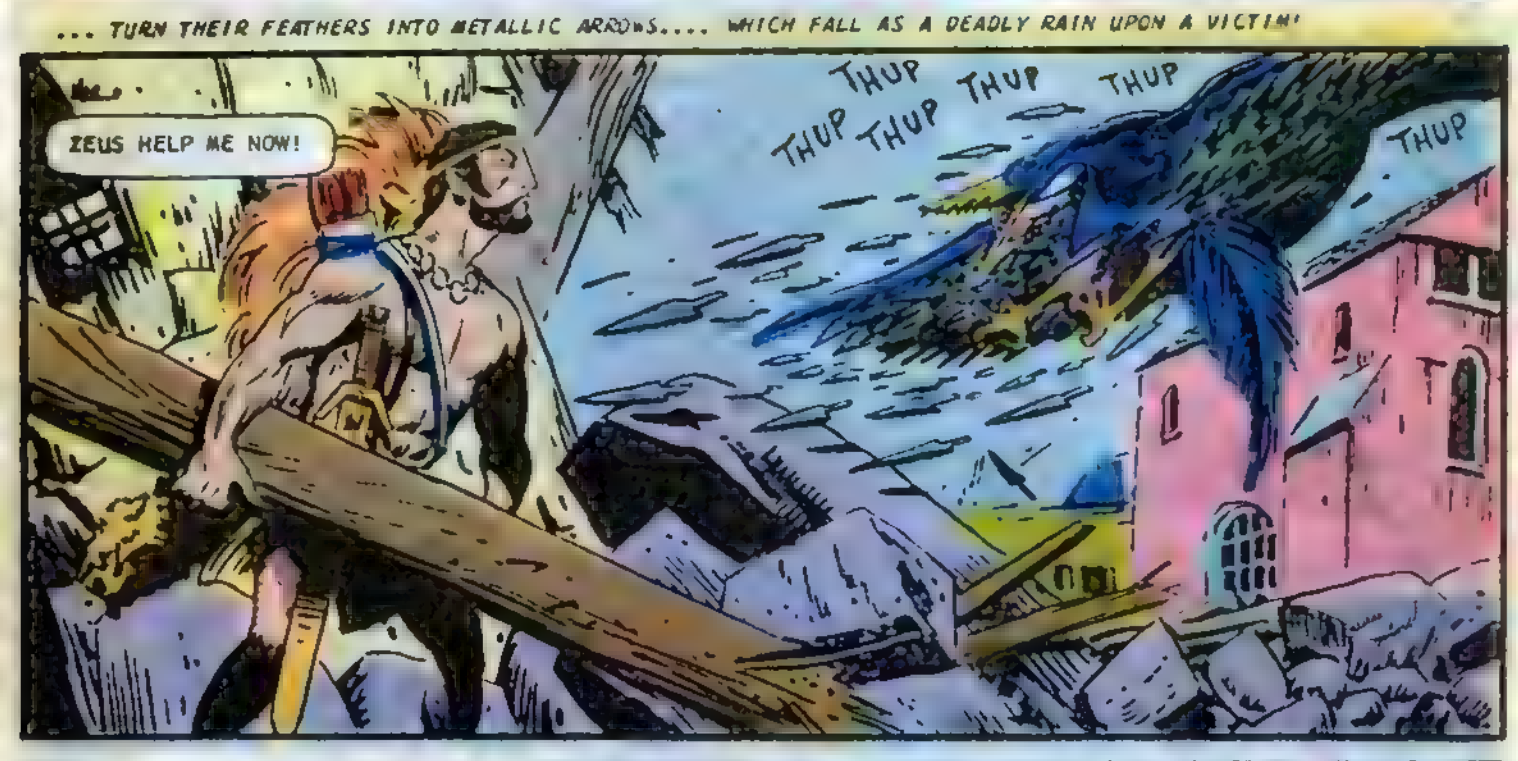
ACCURSED CREATURE! I SHALL SLAY IT WITH MY MIGHTY SPEAR!

I AIM FOR ITS HEAD! IT WILL DIE INSTANTLY!
IT'S HEAD IS COVERED WITH METAL... IT IS ARMORED AGAINST MY SPEAR!
KLANG
ARRAK!
THIS SWORD HAS FELLED MIGHTY OAKS WITH ONE BLOW, IT HAS CLEFT GRANITE... IT WILL NOT FAIL ME NOW!
THE TALONS TOO ARE PROOF AGAINST MY WEAPONS!
KLANG

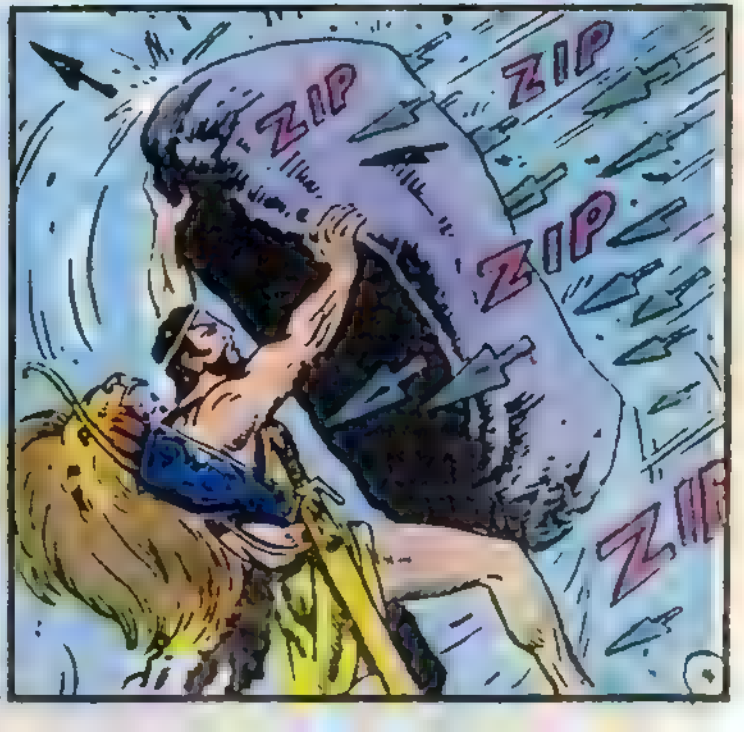
WHAT CAN I USE? AM I TO PERISH HERE, FOOD FOR THIS MONSTROUS VULTURE?
I WILL NOT CRY OUT TO MY FATHER, ZEUS! I MUST FIND MY OWN SALVATION!
ARRA
HAWHAWHAW! TAKE HIM, MY BEAUTY! DINE WELL... YOUR MEAL WILL BE ROYAL, FOR HE IS THE SON OF ZEUS!
MARS, THOU ART A WAYWARD AND WICKED GOD! THOU KNOWEST HERCULES IS WELL BELOVED BY ME AND STILL THY FOUL FOWLS ARE SET UPON HIM! I AM TEMPTED TO HURL THEE FROM OLYMPUS, TO SEND THEE TO THE NETHERWORLD, SET THEE TO FEEDING THE FIRES WITH PLUTO'S SLAVES!
NAY, ZEUS, THOU MAYEST NOT. IT IS AGAINST THE RULES THOUEST FORMED WHEN THE WORLD WAS FORMED.
WHAT WEAPON IS LEFT? THE CREATURE IS ARMORED LIKE MARS HIMSELF. THERE IS A WEAPON!
AM I NOT THE STRONGEST MORTAL TO EVER TROD THE EARTH?
THE HUGE TIMBER LYING UNDER HERCULES' HAND IS HIS WEAPON... HE SWINGS IT AS AN ORDINARY MAN WOULD A CANE... AND THE STYMPHALIAN BIRD OF PREY CRUMPLES ITS NECK BROKEN BY THE BLOW!
SNAP
ARRRRRKK

BEWARE, HERCULES! ONE OF THEM IS COMING TO ATTACK!
BAH! THEY DARE NOT APPROACH LEST I BEAT THEM TO THE GROUND!

BUT THE STYMPHALIAN BIRDS HAVE A STRANGE ABILITY HERCULES HAS NOT OBSERVED! THEY CAN...
ARRRAKK
ARRRAKK
APRAKK

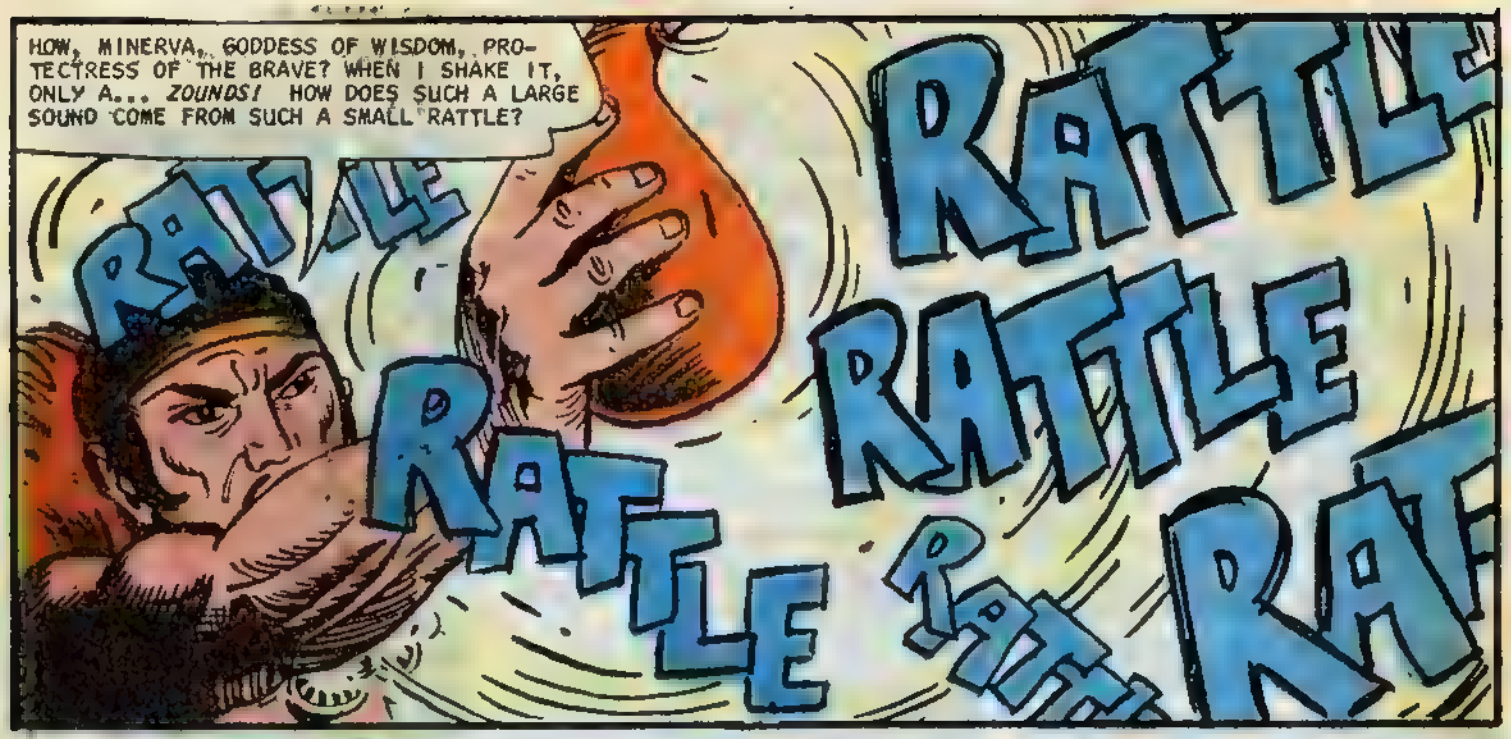

... TURN THEIR FEATHERS INTO METALLIC ARROWS.... WHICH FALL AS A DEADLY RAIN UPON A VICTIM!
ZEUS HELP ME NOW!
THUP
THUP
THUP
THUP
THUP
THUP

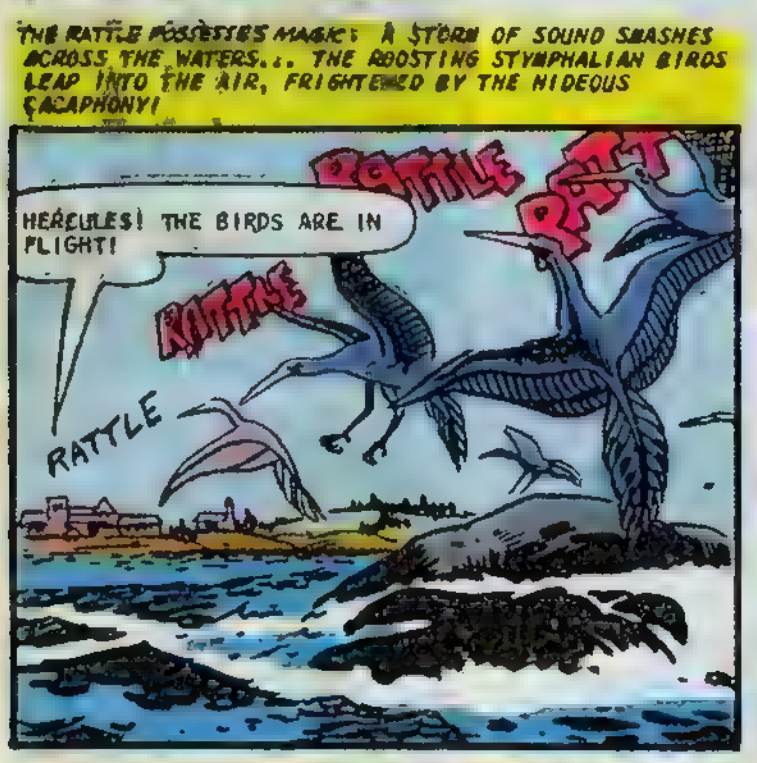
I HAVE A SPLIT SECOND OF LIFE LEFT...


ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP

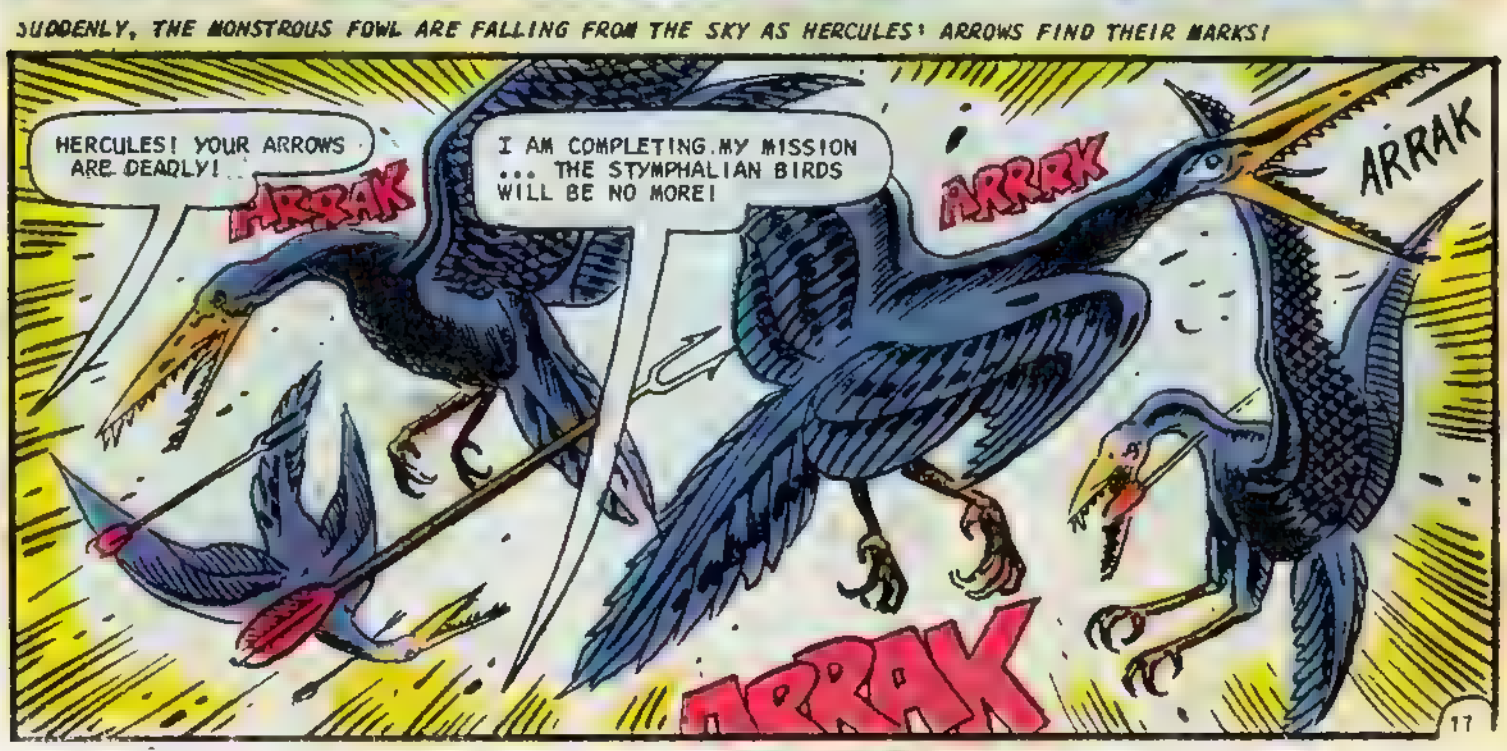
SUDDENLY, HERCULES REALIZES HE HAS A WEAPON... THE BOW FORGED FOR HIM BY HIS HALF-BROTHER, VULCAN, ARMORER TO THE GODS

HERA'S LAUGH ECHOES ACROSS MOUNT OLYMPUS AS SHE WATCHED THE WOES OF HERCULES. MARS' BOOMING GUFFAW THUNDERS AMONG THE PEAKS... BUT THERE IS ONE OF THE GODS WHO DOES NOT ENJOY THE MAN-GOD'S PLIGHT. APHRODITE, WHO FINDS HIM FAIR, GRIEVES FOR HERCULES.
IT ISN'T FAIR! THE QUEEN OF THE GODS AND THE GOD OF WAR ARE ALLIED AGAINST POOR HERCULES!
APHRODITE, MY CHILD, WHY DOST THOU GRIEVE?
IT TAKES BUT A MOMENT TO BABBLE THE TALE AND THEN...
GRIEVE NO MORE, LOVE GODDESS. I WILL SEND A TOKEN OF MY GOODWILL TO THY HERO BELOW.
I CAN DO NAUGHT! MY ARROWS WOULD DESTROY THOSE EVIL BIRDS IF THEY WERE WITHIN RANGE... BUT THEY NEST OUT THERE FAR FROM LAND WHERE I CANNOT GO! IF ONLY I COULD BRING THEM HITHER!
THE GODS HAVE FORSAKEN ME! I AM ALONE WI... WHAT IS THIS? A TOKEN FROM MOUNT OLYMPUS PERHAPS?
IT... IT IS *A CHILD'S TOY!* A SILLY LITTLE RATTLE SUCH AS BABIES ARE GIVEN TO QUIET THEM!
SCORN IT NOT, HERCULES. IT HOLDS THE ANSWER TO YOUR WOE!
RATTLE
RATTLE


HOW, MINERVA, GODDESS OF WISDOM, PROTECTRESS OF THE BRAVE? WHEN I SHAKE IT, ONLY A... ZOUNDS! HOW DOES SUCH A LARGE SOUND COME FROM SUCH A SMALL RATTLE?
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RAT
RAT


THE RATTLE POSSESSES MAGIC! A STORM OF SOUND SMASHES ACROSS THE WATERS... THE ROOSTING STYMPHALIAN BIRDS LEAP INTO THE AIR, FRIGHTENED BY THE HIDEOUS CACAPHONY!
HERCULES! THE BIRDS ARE IN FLIGHT!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATT

KEEP SHAKING MINERVA'S RATTLE... THE BIRDS ARE STUNNED... THEY FLY RIGHT TO ME!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE


SUDDENLY, THE MONSTROUS FOWL ARE FALLING FROM THE SKY AS HERCULES' ARROWS FIND THEIR MARKS!
HERCULES! YOUR ARROWS ARE DEADLY!
I AM COMPLETING MY MISSION ... THE STYMPHALIAN BIRDS WILL BE NO MORE!
ARRRAK
ARRRRK
ARRAK
ARRAK

MARS HIMSELF WITNESSES THE DEMISE OF HIS DEADLY PLUCK...BUT HE HAS INTERFERED ENOUGH AND ZEUS HAS [illegible] HIM TO MOLEST HERCULES FURTHER!

ARRRAK

ARRRAK

ARRRAK

ARRRAK

BACK, BACK TO KING EURYSTHEUS TO REPORT YET ANOTHER MISSION ACCOMPLISHED...

WHILE, ON OLYMPUS, ZEUS REJOICETH AND BIDDETH A FEAST PREPARED TO WHICH HE SUMMONS...:

HERCULES, REMAIN WITH US HERE IN FAIR ARCADIA. I LOVEST THEE WELL AND I WOULD DO AUGHT TO MAKE THEE HAPPY.

I FIND THEE FAIR, GENTLE MAIDEN, BUT I HAVE CHOSEN THE STERN PATH OF DUTY AND I MUST FORSAKE THE PLEASURES ORDINARY MEN FIND ON THEIR ROAD THROUGH LIFE.

QUEEN HERA! MARS! JOIN ME! WE HAVE A TASTY TREAT WORTHY OF THE GODS.

THIS IS A RARE SPECIES FOUND ONLY ON A LAKE NEAR STYMPHALUS! MY SON, HERCULES, SLEW IT AND THE CHEF...

I BEG OF YOU, MIGHTY ZEUS, EXCUSE ME. I AM SOMEWHAT ILL.

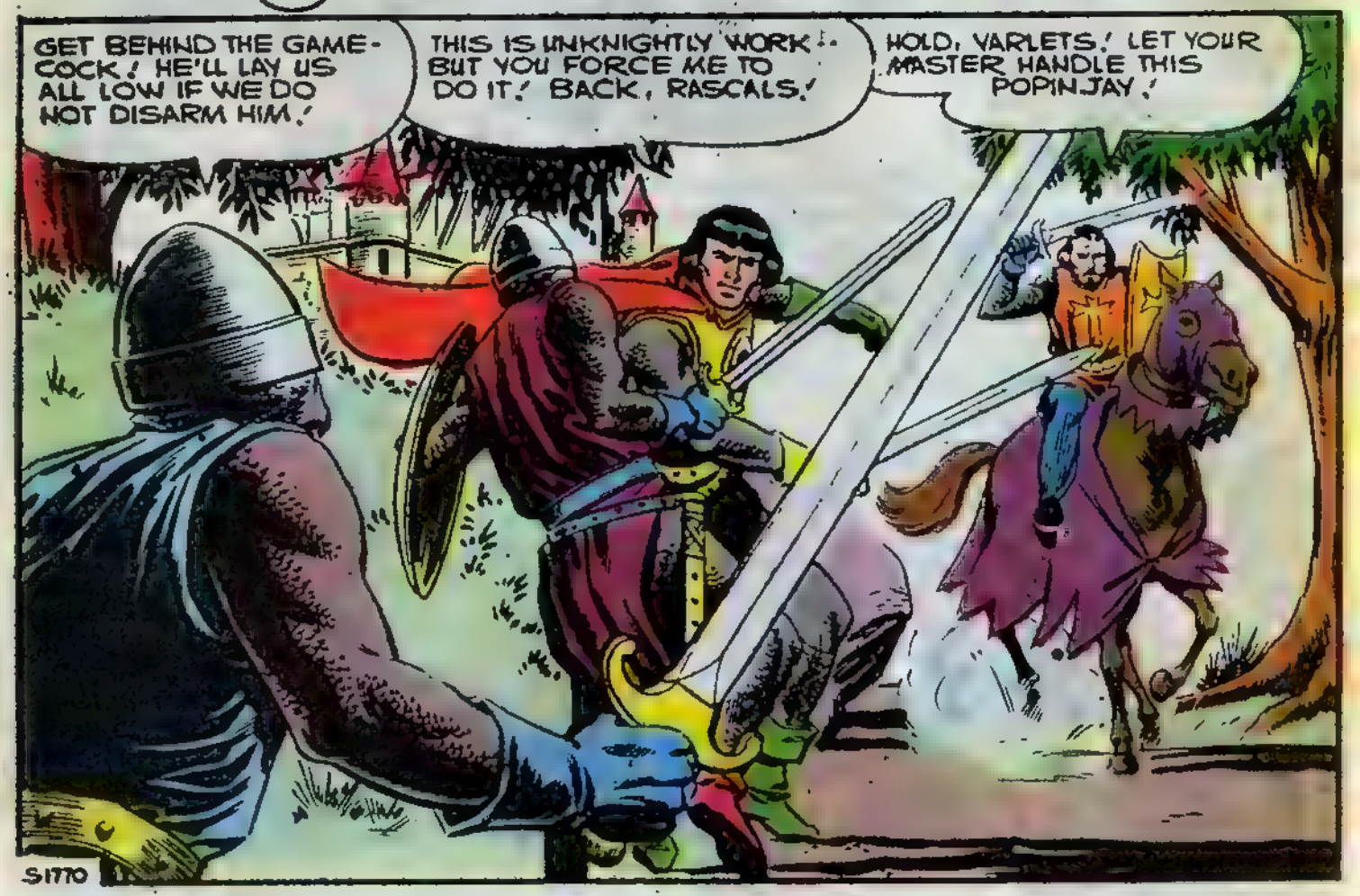
AND I AM ABSOLUTELY *NAUSEATED!*

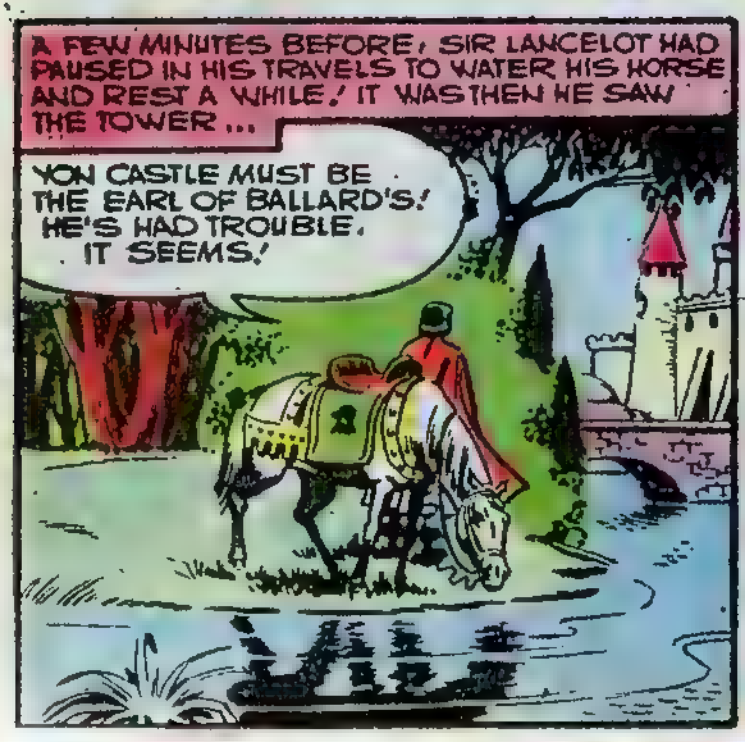
UNAWARE OF THE GODLY FEAST ABOVE, HERCULES AWAITS THE NEXT QUEST WHICH WILL TAKE HIM FAR INTO STRANGE PLACES IN HIS QUEST FOR ADMISSION TO THE FAMILY OF GODS DWELLING ON MOUNT OLYMPUS!

END

KING ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE WERE SWORN TO DEFEND THE WEAK AND FIGHT TYRANNY WHEREVER IT WAS FOUND! SIR LANCELOT, THE BRAVEST AND HANDSOMEST KNIGHT OF THEM ALL, OFTEN LEFT THE GAY COURT TO ROAM ENGLAND SEEKING EVIL TO DESTROY! IT WAS ON ONE OF THESE MISSIONS THAT HE FOUND THE BATTERED CASTLE OF BALLARD!

Sir Lancelot and the HAUNTED TOWER





I AM BALLARD'S FRIEND! I AM OF KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE! HOW IS THE EARL'S COMELY DAUGHTER?
SORE BESET, SIRE! SEE YON TOWER? UNKNOWN TO THE TYRANT WHO HAS CAPTURED BALLARD'S CASTLE, THAT TOWER IS...
MORE PLOTTING? ONE SIDE, KNAVE! WHAT YOU WANT? WHO DO YOU SPY FOR?
AT PRESENT, I WANT TO TWIST YOUR NOSE, AND I SEEK THE MAN WHO HAS HARMED MY FRIEND, THE EARL OF BALLARD!
AND I'LL DO THE ONE! METHINKS THE SECOND WILL SEEK ME OUT!
OWWW! TURN LOOSE!
DUCK, SIR KNIGHT! LOOK YONDER, IN THE CASTLE!
AT WHAT? I DON'T... ZOUNDS, THAT WAS CLOSE!
'TIS THE EARL'S DAUGHTER, THE LADY BARBARA!
I'LL HAVE WORD WITH MILADY LATER! NOW, THESE SCOUNDRELS DEMAND ATTENTION!
12

BACK, HOUNDS, YOUR MASTER ARRIVES! LET HIM SHOW HIS METTLE!
AGAINST ONE OF KING ARTHUR'S MUDDLE-HEADED SIMPLETONS, I'LL HAVE LITTLE TROUBLE!

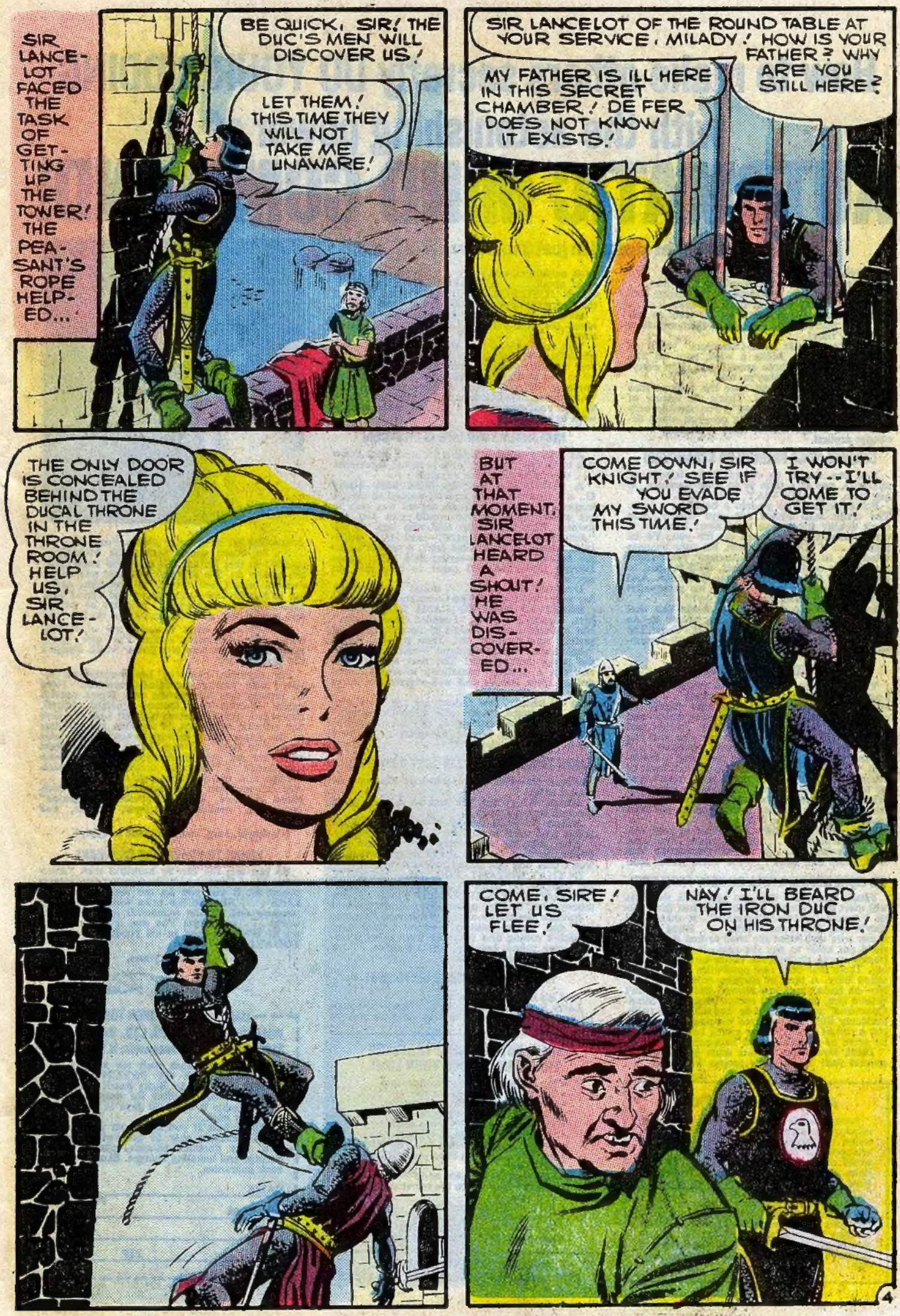
WHO DO I FACE? I AM SIR LANCELOT!
I AM THE DUC DE FER, OF NORMANY! NOW, FOOL, EN GARDE!

AT THE CHALLENGE, SIR LANCELOT WHIRLED, BUT TOO LATE! DE FER'S KNAVE HAD ALREADY SWUNG...

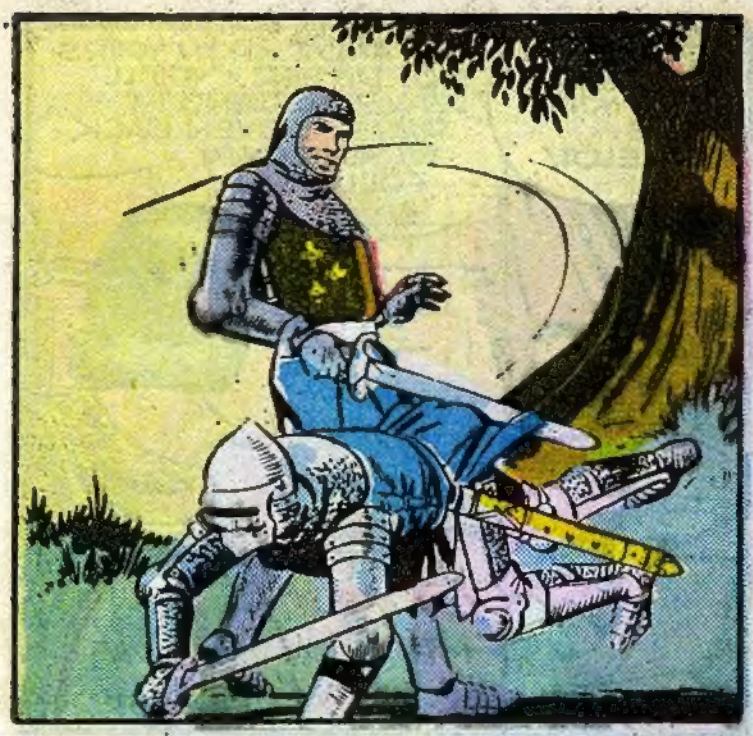
WHEN HE RECOVERS, IF THE FOOL DOES, BID HIM TO BEGONE!

WHERE... I REMEMBER! THE ROGUE BEHIND ME!
AYE! LIKE TO BROKE YOUR HEAD! WE NEED YOU, SIR! TRY TO REGAIN YOUR STRENGTH!

SEE? MILADY BARBARA NEEDS HELP! ALAS, WE CANNOT REACH HER THERE!
I CAN! FETCH ME A ROPE, MAN!

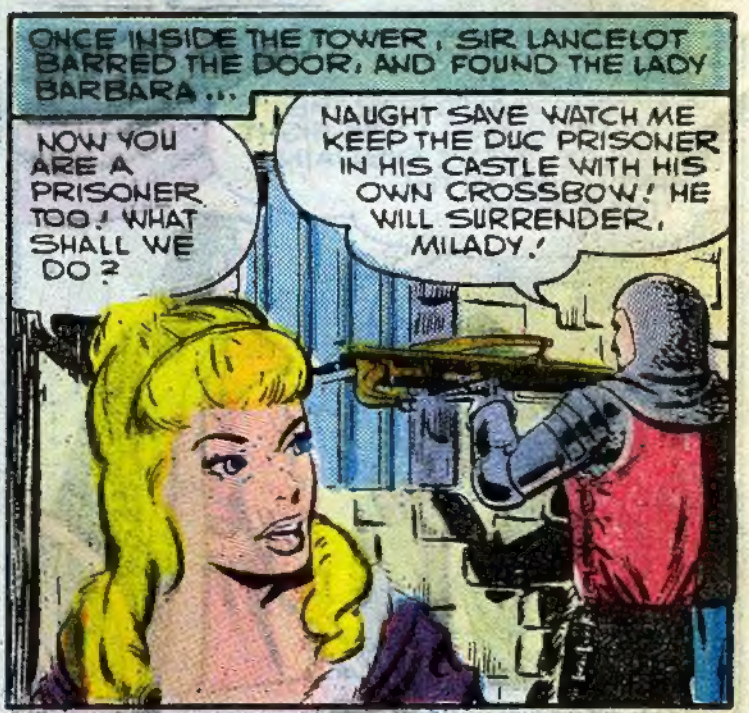

SIR LANCE-LOT FACED THE TASK OF GET-TING UP THE TOWER! THE PEA-SANT'S ROPE HELP-ED...
BE QUICK, SIR! THE DUC'S MEN WILL DISCOVER US!
LET THEM! THIS TIME THEY WILL NOT TAKE ME UNAWARE!
SIR LANCELOT OF THE ROUND TABLE AT YOUR SERVICE, MILADY! HOW IS YOUR FATHER? WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?
MY FATHER IS ILL HERE IN THIS SECRET CHAMBER! DE FER DOES NOT KNOW IT EXISTS!
THE ONLY DOOR IS CONCEALED BEHIND THE DUCAL THRONE IN THE THRONE ROOM! HELP US, SIR LANCE-LOT!
BUT AT THAT MOMENT, SIR LANCELOT HEARD A SHOUT! HE WAS DIS-COVER-ED...
COME DOWN, SIR KNIGHT! SEE IF YOU EVADE MY SWORD THIS TIME!
I WON'T TRY -- I'LL COME TO GET IT!
COME, SIRE! LET US FLEE!
NAY! I'LL BEARD THE IRON DUC ON HIS THRONE!
4

THE DUC'S ASTONISHED GUARDS HAD NO CHANCE TO STOP THE NOBLE KNIGHT...
WAIT, KNAVE! YOU CANNOT...
ONE SIDE! I WILL HARM NO ONE BUT YOUR TYRANNOUS MASTER!
YOU ARE A FOOL! YOU KNOW YOUR FATE, LANCELOT!
AYE, AND I KNOW YOURS TOO, DE FER! YOU'LL LEAVE ENGLAND IN RAGS, DRIVEN BACK TO YOUR OWN FOUL NEST!
I WILL DEFEAT KING ARTHUR AS EASILY AS I DO YOU AND FOR THE SAME REASONS! YOU FIGHT BY RULES THAT I DISDAIN! THROW HIM IN THE DUNGEON!
FOLK WILL SAY YOU FEARED ME! WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER TO BEST ME IN FAIR COMBAT? WHERE IS YOUR GUILE, MAN?
AYE, YOU'RE RIGHT! FETCH HIM A SWORD AND ARMOR! A WOODEN SWORD -- FALSE ARMOR! I WILL FIGHT HIM ON KNIGHTLY TERMS! HA, HA, HA!
A FEW MOMENTS LATER -- ARMED WITH A JESTER'S SWORD, COVERED BY A FOOL'S ARMOR...
THEY WILL LAUGH, LANCELOT! YOUR ROUND TABLE KNIGHTS WILL BE MOCKED!
IF I AM DEFEATED, PERHAPS! BUT EVEN WITH THIS I CAN BEST YOU!
5



MY ARMOR IS PAPER--BUT LIGHT, MAKING ME SUPPLE! YOU, DE FER, ARE HEAVILY BURDENED, BUT I CAN THROW YOU STILL!

HE THREW DOWN THE DUC! GET HIM!
COME TO ME TO THE TOWER, LADS! I WILL MAKE YOU WELCOME!


ONCE INSIDE THE TOWER, SIR LANCELOT BARRED THE DOOR, AND FOUND THE LADY BARBARA...
NOW YOU ARE A PRISONER TOO! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
NAUGHT SAVE WATCH ME KEEP THE DUC PRISONER IN HIS CASTLE WITH HIS OWN CROSSBOW! HE WILL SURRENDER, MILADY!

THERE WAS ONE ENTRANCE TO THE CASTLE... AND SIR LANCE-LOT'S CROSS-BOW MADE THAT UN-USEABLE! MEAN-WHILE, THE PEASANT WHO HAD AIDED LANCELOT HAD GONE FOR HELP...
LANCELOT'S WON AFTER ALL! KING ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS ARE OUTSIDE THE WALLS! SEND OUT A FLAG OF SURRENDER!

LATER...
COME TO THE CASTLE AGAIN, SIR LANCELOT!
THANK YOU, LADY BARBARA, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS LIKE THE IRON DUC WHO OPPRESS THE WEAK! TILL THEY ARE GONE, I HAVE LITTLE TIME FOR PLEASURE!
END